

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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S/S - MR. ORTIZ

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 272206

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, US, KS

SUBJ: HIGH LEVEL REACTIONS TO U.S. PRESS ALLEGATIONS

ON ILLICIT ROK LOBBYING

REF: SEOUL 8838

1. APPRECIATE INFORMATIVE REPORTING CONTAINED REFTEL.

WE TRUST THAT EMBASSY IS VIGOROUSLY AND CATEGORICALLY

DENYING PRIVATE COMMENTS BY SENIOR ROKG OFFICIALS THAT

USG IS SOMEHOW "COLLUDING" WITH MEDIA IN AN EFFORT TO

"GET" PRESIDENT PARK (REFTEL PARA 3). OUR POSITION IN

THIS INVESTIGATION IS THAT UNDER OUR LEGAL SYSTEM ALL

ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE REQUIRED TO COOPERATE

FULLY WITH JUSTICE TO SEE THAT US LAWS ARE ENFORCED.

THIS REQUIREMENT AND NOT ANY SUPPOSED POLITICAL OBJECTIVE

HAS BEEN THE SOLE BASIS FOR OUR COOPERATION WITH JUSTICE.

2. WITH RESPECT TO DEPARTMENT'S PRESS HANDLING OF ISSUE,

WE TRUST THAT EMBASSY IS CONTINUING TO MAKE CLEAR TO ROKG

OFFICIALS THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO PUBLICLY DENY OR OTHERWISE

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COMMENT ON ALLEGATIONS APPEARING IN THE PRESS WHICH INVOLVE

ISSUES UNDER INVESTIGATION BY JUSTICE. IN THIS REGARD, MOREOVER, ROKG SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT SELECTIVE DENIALS OF SOME CHARGES WOULD ENTAIL RISK OF SEEMING TACITLY TO CONFIRM ACCURACY OF OTHERS. ROKG SHOULD ALSO UNDERSTAND

THAT STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED BY SOME PRESS STORIES TO UNNAMED "STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES" IN NO WAY CONSTITUTE OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT COMMENTS ON THIS MATTER.

3. AMBASSADOR MAY DRAW ON ABOVE IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR ROKG FIGURES. AT SAME TIME, HE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO EMPHASIZE THAT U.S. POLICY TOWARDS KOREA AND OUR SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH ROK REMAIN UNCHANGED. INVESTIGATION NOW IN PROCESS IS AN INTERNAL U.S. LEGAL MATTER AND DOES NOT CHANGE OUR DESIRE TO MAINTAIN OUR CLOSE, CONSTRUCTIVE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO POINT OUT IMPORTANCE OF OUR BASIC RELATIONSHIP WITH KOREA, DESPITE THE ATMOSPHERE THAT HAS BEEN GENERATED BY RECENT PRESS ATTENTION.

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